United Nations S/2016/11

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 January 2016

Original: English

# Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

## I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 21 June to 18 December 2015 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my previous report, dated 2 July 2015 (S/2015/517), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2234 (2015).

2. As at 15 December 2015, the strength of the military component stood at 860 for all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 57 (see annex).

## II. Significant political developments

3. The talks between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, as well as their respective negotiators, have continued to take place at a steady and intensified pace. In addition, the sides continue to work intensively in various working groups of experts and technical committees. The leaders have consistently underscored that they seek to reach mutually beneficial solutions on issues which are being negotiated interdependently with the aim of moving the process forward. More details are to be found in my report on the status of the negotiations in Cyprus (S/2016/15).

4. Displaying their commitment to a common future, the two leaders issued a joint statement on 18 November condemning the incidents that occurred two days earlier, in which two vehicles belonging to Turkish Cypriots were targeted during protests in south Nicosia by Greek Cypriot youths throwing stones, resulting in two Turkish Cypriots being injured. The two leaders jointly affirmed that they stood together against racism and hatred, whatever the source, and that such deplorable acts would be thoroughly investigated and would not go unpunished. Nine people, four of them students, were subsequently arrested in connection with the incidents; five of the nine have been charged. The two leaders indicated that they would not allow such unacceptable incidents to jeopardize the ongoing negotiations in any way, in particular at the very time that they were trying in earnest to find a solution to the Cyprus problem.



Please recycle

5. In response to the above-mentioned incidents, on 25 November, the two leaders announced the establishment of a technical committee on education tasked with reviewing research and good practices and undertaking new research on how education could contribute to conflict transformation, peace, reconciliation and the countering of prejudice, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and extremism and with devising a mutually acceptable mechanism for the implementation of confidence-building measures in schools and promoting contact and cooperation between students and educators from the two communities. In addition, the committee was tasked with making recommendations regarding the coordination of the two educational systems.

6. My Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, visited Cyprus from 23 to 26 October to gain a better understanding of how UNFICYP might best support the peace process in the coming period. In the light of the positive momentum in the negotiations, he also discussed with the sides their expectations regarding how the United Nations might support the implementation of an agreement. During the visit, Mr. Ladsous informed Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı that the United Nations would start to engage in settlement-related planning in order to be prepared for any post-settlement role assigned to it by the two leaders and the Security Council.

## III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

7. UNFICYP is intended first and foremost to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Its mandate requires reconciling security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo with allowing Cypriots who live and work in the buffer zone to pursue civilian activities and enjoy full and productive lives. Such an approach, when successful, builds confidence between communities and contributes to the overall effort by the United Nations in support of the peace process.

### A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

8. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to maintain the integrity and stability of the buffer zone by means of regular patrols, detailed observation and sustained liaison at all levels. Direct and effective lines of communication and regular meetings with the respective commanders allowed the Force to avert attempts by both sides to effect low-level changes to the military status quo and allowed the Force to impartially address and manage disputes that might otherwise have escalated to higher levels or led to heightened tensions. Building on the positive climate of the current and previous reporting periods, UNFICYP maintained strong relations with each of the opposing forces. Nonetheless, the continued non-recognition by the opposing forces of the aide-memoire of 1989, the lack of a common understanding of the exact delineation of ceasefire lines and the contesting of UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone continue to pose challenges. Instances of unannounced construction or refurbishment of military positions along

the ceasefire lines on both sides also continued to cause concern, particularly when perceived as conferring a military advantage. Likewise, increased civilian access to and activity in the buffer zone through normalization continued to present specific challenges to the mission in terms of controlling the buffer zone and to strain resources.

9. Over the past six months, the Turkish forces have installed closed-circuit television equipment at 28 locations along the length of its ceasefire line, in addition to the existing 29 locations in sectors 2 and 4. Of the 57 closed-circuit television-equipped locations, 42 posts have seen no reduction in military personnel. Without such reductions, closed-circuit television cameras confer a military advantage and, as such, constitute a breach of the status quo. In addition, military positions established by both forces inside the buffer zone that violate the status quo, including in Strovilia, remain in place and are classified as permanent violations. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

## B. Demining activity

10. As I noted in my previous report, in May 2015, a mine clearance team from Cambodia, operating under the auspices of inter-mission cooperation with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), began to clear landmines displaced from a minefield north of the ceasefire line, near Mammari, into the buffer zone by heavy rains. A surface area of 16,691 $m^2$ was cleared, with a total of seven items found and destroyed. Given that that was the second mine-wash incident in that area in as many years, UNFICYP has received assurances from the Turkish Cypriot security forces that they will clear the minefield north of the ceasefire line. In the interim, temporary mitigation measures have been put in place to prevent such incidents in the future.

11. Following the transfer by Mr. Anastasiades to Mr. Akıncı of the coordinates of 28 minefields laid by the National Guard in the north in 1974, UNFICYP facilitated a survey by the United Nations Mine Action Service. On 7 July, 25 of the 28 locations were deemed and declared to not pose a threat. The remaining three locations, two of which are in a military-controlled area, were identified as requiring further technical intervention to determine with certainty that they were safe. Two further areas were identified from information received from the Turkish Cypriot security forces that require further intervention, one of which included a visible anti-tank mine alongside a disused road. Although work on these five areas is needed, since they are either inaccessible or well-marked, the mission has assessed that they pose no immediate risk to life.

12. The same Cambodian demining team carried out mine clearance in support of the opening of crossings at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya from 28 September to 26 November. A technical survey at Deryneia/Derinya resulted in the western portion of the United Nations recorded minefield being assessed as posing no threat, thus enabling the Technical Committee on Crossings to proceed with plans to establish a crossing at that location. At Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç, five dangerous areas totalling 1,815 $m^2$ were cleared around the crossing site. Thirty-one anti-tank mines and one trip flare were found and destroyed.

13. Despite repeated requests by UNFICYP, during the reporting period, no progress was registered on the issue of access to the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone, of which three are under the control of the National Guard and one is under the control of Turkish forces. While the Turkish Cypriot side has indicated that it would accept the clearance of all four areas as a package, the Greek Cypriot side maintains the position that its three minefields are required in order to counter a perceived threat. Efforts continue at all levels to advance a more comprehensive approach to demining, both inside and outside the buffer zone.

14. The United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards visited Cyprus from 11 to 13 October to witness first-hand UNFICYP support to demining efforts in Cyprus and to raise awareness of the continued dangers posed by mines on the island.

## C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

15. Relations between UNFICYP police and the police services on both sides remained cooperative and constructive during the reporting period, with daily communications at all levels, enhancing cooperation in addressing operational matters within the buffer zone. As part of its mandated task to contribute to the maintenance of law and order, UNFICYP police continued to assist and facilitate investigations into criminal matters occurring within the buffer zone.

16. In the case of the mixed village of Pyla inside the buffer zone, criminal activities on the part of members of both communities continued to increase, in particular relating to illegal casinos, which rose in number from four to seven during the reporting period. UNFICYP has intensified efforts to secure a practical solution to the casino issue in Pyla with cooperation from both sides.

17. During the hunting season, between September and December, UNFICYP recorded 69 incursions into the buffer zone by Greek Cypriot hunters who were often armed, compared with 54 such instances during the same period in the previous year. To help address such activities, UNFICYP police intensified its liaison with local authorities and intelligence-led patrolling, including joint patrols with UNFICYP military and game wardens, resulting in charges being made against five such hunters.

18. Parallel to such operational liaison, UNFICYP police facilitated four meetings of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters. The Joint Communications Room continued to act as a forum for information exchange on criminal matters with intercommunal elements, including investigations of humanitarian cases.

19. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to face challenges to its authority in the buffer zone, including at times aggressive behaviour by individuals engaged in unauthorized activities. In such cases, UNFICYP urges the competent authorities to take prompt action, including through judicial proceedings.

20. Regarding its mandate to contribute to a return to normal conditions, UNFICYP continued to allow, to the extent possible, safe and orderly civilian activities in the buffer zone, issuing more than 809 permits for farming, providing access to employment and utilities and approving 21 of 22 applications for civilian construction projects. The mission continued to urge the authorities, local

community leaders and civilians to cooperate with the mission by providing relevant information on civilian projects in the buffer zone in accordance with established procedures. The university in Pyla continues to operate without UNFICYP authorization.

21. Incidents of non-compliance with established UNFICYP procedures, particularly by farmers, continued to cause concern. In one such incident, on 28 September, a Greek Cypriot farmer struck an anti-tank mine after driving his tractor across the northern ceasefire line into a marked Turkish forces minefield near Mammari. Although the farmer was not injured, the incident raised tensions between Greek Cypriot farmers and the Turkish forces in areas where farmers work in proximity to the ceasefire line of the Turkish forces.

22. From July to December, 922,553 official crossings of the buffer zone were recorded. UNFICYP continued to play an important role with regard to all interactions that took place at, around or through crossing points. In particular, UNFICYP police continued to provide escorts for convoys with civilians and humanitarian supplies at the Limnitis/Yeşılırmak crossing point in accordance with the agreement reached by the leaders in October 2010.

23. Beyond the buffer zone, UNFICYP continued to provide humanitarian support for 342 Greek Cypriots and 106 Maronites residing in the north, including through weekly deliveries of humanitarian assistance and by facilitating the post-mortem transfer of two Greek Cypriots for burial in villages in the north. Logistical support, including the delivery of school textbooks, continued to be provided to the Greek Cypriot primary and secondary schools on the Karpas Peninsula. Although none of the textbooks were rejected, Turkish Cypriot authorities continued the practice of vetting the Greek Cypriot textbooks. The appointment of 8 out of 11 teachers nominated by the Greek Cypriots to serve in schools on the Karpas Peninsula was approved by the Turkish Cypriot authorities.

24. Following agreement by Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı, two Greek Cypriot nurses were authorized to provide services at a local clinic on the Karpas Peninsula during the reporting period. Requests for Greek-speaking doctors to attend to the health needs of elderly Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the north had yet to be addressed. The mission continued to engage with local authorities to ensure access to health, welfare and educational services for Turkish Cypriots residing in the south. Although there were no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish language school in Limassol, Turkish Cypriot teachers continued to provide Turkish language education to students at a high school and primary school attended by Turkish-speaking pupils.

25. UNFICYP assisted in addressing the legal and humanitarian issues faced by two Turkish Cypriots detained in the south and by one Greek Cypriot detained in the north during the reporting period.

26. UNFICYP continued to facilitate contacts between Nicosia municipal offices to promote enhanced cooperation, including through four meetings of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot deputy mayors and their respective teams to develop joint projects to address environmental, social and health issues of common concern. Likewise, UNFICYP continued to provide support to representatives of the Nicosia Master Plan — a bicommunal mechanism established in 1979 to address urban issues in old town Nicosia — in particular their efforts and plans to preserve

cultural heritage sites in Nicosia, including along the Green Line. More broadly, UNFICYP also continued to encourage the communities located inside the buffer zone to address issues such as the need to clean and care for the environment and, where possible, encouraged bicommunal efforts in those areas.

27. With a view to fostering bicommunal cooperation and reconciliation, UNFICYP supported 37 sporting, cultural, educational and other civil society events in cooperation with international and local partners, in which more than 5,200 individuals from both communities participated. This included a bicommunal concert in the buffer zone on 18 September by Greek and Turkish artists in support of peace and reunification, in which more than 3,800 people from both communities participated. The second International Cyprus Car Rally, which was held on 26 September and included a crossing of the buffer zone outside the walls of old town Nicosia, saw the participation of 66 racing cars, including cars from both communities and from other countries, compared with 45 in 2014. In addition, the Ledra Palace Hotel was host to some 58 bicommunal gatherings, including four meetings of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party representatives under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia.

28. During the reporting period, as part of its contribution to confidence-building measures and their implementation, UNFICYP significantly stepped up its support to the bicommunal technical committees, taking on responsibility for five committees (on cultural heritage, environment, health, crisis management and humanitarian affairs) in addition to the three it already facilitates (on crossings, crime and criminal matters and broadcasting).

29. More specifically, following the announcement by the leaders on 28 May, UNFICYP supported the work of the Technical Committee on Crossings on the opening of the Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya crossings, facilitating six meetings and two site visits during the reporting period. Agreement was reached in the Committee on Routes, Technical Specifications and Modalities on project implementation for both crossing points. The European Union, for its part, amended its Green Line regulation to add Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya to the list of official crossing points and, on 17 November, its member States unanimously approved the allocation of 2 million euros through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for both crossings, to be drawn from the aid package for the Turkish Cypriot community. With both crossing sites declared mine-free, construction work is expected to begin in the first trimester of 2016. UNFICYP continues to facilitate discussions in the Technical Committee on possible additional crossings to be opened in the future.

30. The Technical Committee on the Environment resumed its activities after a two-year hiatus, meeting three times between July and December. The discussions, which UNFICYP facilitated, resulted in four joint visits to locations in the north and the south to address issues of mutual interest such as wastewater treatment and solid waste management. The Technical Committee on Broadcasting, for its part, met twice during the reporting period to discuss ways of overcoming interference on the frequency spectrum, including for FM commercial radio and television channels, future planning for digital television and the clearing of analogue television frequencies as dictated by the International Telecommunication Union. The Committee saw some success in persuading commercial FM stations to adhere to the correct modulation standards, thereby reducing interference within Nicosia.

UNFICYP facilitated three meetings of the Technical Committee on Health, which resulted in an exchange of information on various aspects of the health sectors on each side. Following up on the agreement by leaders to the interconnection of electricity grids as a confidence-building measure, UNFICYP also escorted joint technical teams into the buffer zone to undertake necessary repair work in preparation for the reconnecting of the grids.

31. For its part, UNDP, with strong support from the European Union, continued to work closely with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage. The restoration of three cultural heritage sites was completed during the reporting period, including the Othello Tower in Famagusta. Tenders for 3 cultural heritage sites in the walled city of Famagusta and designs for an additional 12 sites are under way. Work is progressing on the restoration of the Apostolos Andreas monastery on the Karpas Peninsula. Separately, in support of a political settlement, UNDP continued to facilitate the Cyprus dialogue forum, bringing together 94 organizations from both communities, including political parties, businesses and industries, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations to build consensus on essential socioeconomic issues related to a settlement. The UNDP-managed peacebuilding programme in Cyprus, the Action for Cooperation and Trust Programme, is set to close by the end of 2015.

32. The Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce continued to provide a model for cooperation and to advocate actively for a solution to the Cyprus question. The intercommunal internship programme launched during the previous reporting period has been particularly successful, with 12 Greek Cypriots and 9 Turkish Cypriots expected to be placed with companies based in the other community by the beginning of 2016. Preparations for the implementation of a bicommunal business incubation centre are under way.

33. Considerable progress continues to be made in relation to freedom of religion and belief in Cyprus, with the number of services held by Greek Cypriots and Maronites in places of worship in the north increasing year by year, from 31 services approved out of 40 requests in 2013, to 52 approved out of 87 in 2014, and 93 approved out of 133 in 2015. Progress also continued to be made in opening for worship religious sites in the north that had been inaccessible since 1974, with the Turkish Cypriot authorities opening nine new sites for worship during the reporting period.

34. During the past six months, UNFICYP facilitated 49 religious services and commemorative events, involving more than 12,000 individuals, which were either conducted in the buffer zone or required crossing to the other side. Significantly, on 21 July and 30 September, UNFICYP facilitated the crossing of nearly 2,000 pilgrims, largely of Turkish origin, from the north to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca, as jointly requested by the Primate of the Church of Cyprus and the Mufti of Cyprus. The 30 September pilgrimage to Hala Sultan Tekke took place in the presence of a representative of the Church of Cyprus for the first time.

35. Meanwhile, the religious leaders of Cyprus intensified their dialogue and joint efforts. In their first meeting with Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı, held on 10 September at Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone, the religious leaders reiterated their full support to the negotiations for a settlement of the Cyprus problem and promoted measures to further ease restrictions on freedom of religion,

including improved access to sites of worship across the island. On 24 November, the religious leaders issued a joint statement expressing their united voice against all forms of attacks, terrorism and violence in Cyprus and beyond, stressing that the dialogue they had experienced had strengthened their conviction that there would be no future without tolerance, mutual understanding, respect and peaceful coexistence. The visit to Cyprus of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief from 5 to 8 October, for its part, served to highlight the role that cooperation among the religious leaders had played in promoting progress towards the realization of freedom of religion or belief across the island.

## D. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

36. As part of my commitment to ensure compliance with the zero tolerance policy for any act of sexual exploitation or abuse by UNFICYP personnel, during the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to actively engage with the regional conduct and discipline team to implement the initiatives outlined in my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779). As part of the UNFICYP accountability framework, the UNFICYP Conduct and Discipline and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Group continued to monitor on a quarterly basis compliance with the sexual exploitation and abuse plan of action adopted by the mission, designed to implement specific actions to prevent acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by mission personnel and to strengthen reporting mechanisms and assistance provided to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. In line with the provisions of my report, UNFICYP appointed a sexual exploitation and abuse focal point to coordinate and monitor activities related to the prevention, enforcement and remediation of sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the mission has appointed an immediate response team to gather and preserve evidence upon receipt of an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. UNFICYP is in the process of establishing a sexual exploitation and abuse standing task force, to begin functioning on 15 December 2015, to serve as the expert body within the mission providing guidance on operational and strategic sexual exploitation and abuse matters.

37. Between 1 January and 11 December 2015, a single category 1 allegation and one category 2 allegation were reported and referred for investigation. The category 1 allegation is related to a report of sexual exploitation and abuse that was unsubstantiated. It is notable that the total number of allegations for 2015 is less than that for 2014, for which a total number of 14 allegations were reported, of which 4 were category 1 (including 2 unsubstantiated reports of sexual exploitation and abuse) and 10 were category 2.

38. Training is at the core of the activities carried out by UNFICYP to raise awareness of the United Nations standards of conduct and to emphasize the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, a total of 17 training sessions relating to conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse were conducted, in which 553 military personnel, 17 United Nations police personnel and 117 civilian personnel participated. As part of the sexual exploitation and abuse awareness campaign conducted by the mission, UNFICYP personnel have been provided with a list of sexual exploitation and abuse prevention activities to be included,

developed and assessed by each section/office during the 2015-2016 performance period.

## IV. Committee on Missing Persons

39. As at 18 December, out of a total of 2,001 persons on the official list of missing persons, the bicommunal teams of archaeologists of the Committee on Missing Persons had exhumed the remains of 1,059 missing persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 625 individuals have been identified and returned to their respective families, including those of 30 individuals during the reporting period. Between September and November, a Committee excavation team exhumed two burial sites containing the remains of 36 persons in a military area in the north of Nicosia. On 5 November, the Committee was notified by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr. Akıncı, that the Committee's excavation teams would have access to 30 suspected burial sites in military areas in the north of Cyprus over a three-year period, beginning in January 2016, with 10 sites to be excavated each year.

## V. Financial and administrative aspects

40. As indicated in my previous report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 69/296, appropriated the amount of $52.5 million gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $17.6 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

41. As at 5 January 2016, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP amounted to $12.7 million. The total of outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $992.9 million.

42. As at 5 January 2016, amounts owed to contributors for troop costs totalled $1.1 million. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 31 October 2015 and 30 September 2015, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly schedule.

## VI. Observations

43. I am heartened by the steady determination shown by the leaders during the intensified phase of the negotiations. I encourage them to maintain the momentum and to continue their efforts to bring the process to a successful conclusion and reach a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible.

44. It is my firm belief that measures to build confidence are an important element of the current efforts in that they reflect the common position of the leaders that the status quo is unacceptable. Furthermore, such measures have a tangible effect on the everyday lives of Cypriots and build a critical understanding that the status quo in Cyprus is not tenable and that an alternative and better future lies ahead. In that regard, I note that while the implementation of some confidence-building measures agreed to by the leaders is fully under way, there has been little to no progress on

others, such as mobile phone interoperability. I urge the leaders to implement all agreed measures in good faith and without delay.

45. I commend both sides for their decision to open additional crossing points at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Apliç and Deryneia/Derinya and for their sustained engagement during the reporting period to overcome difficulties on the ground and turn that decision into a reality. With high expectations raised, in particular within the local communities, I encourage both leaders to expedite preparations and open the crossings without delay.

46. The incidents of 16 November, during which two Turkish Cypriots were assaulted by Greek Cypriot youths in south Nicosia, were regrettable. Such incidents create tension and fuel mistrust between the communities at a time when the leaders are striving to achieve a lasting solution and to build confidence in a future of peaceful coexistence. The unity displayed by the two leaders in condemning the attacks is to be commended, rightly signalling that such acts would not be tolerated now or in a future united Cyprus.

47. The incidents raised concerns about the role of education in perpetrating prejudice and misconceptions and, by contrast, the role education can play, if utilized appropriately, in promoting a culture of peaceful coexistence. In that regard, I praise the leaders for their political vision and courage in establishing a Technical Committee on Education and I urge them to appoint its members without delay. I believe that such an initiative, if provided with the means necessary to formulate implementable recommendations, can make a critical contribution to the coordination of the two educational systems in a manner that promotes intercommunal tolerance and reconciliation befitting a united Cyprus.

48. UNFICYP support to demining activity, undertaken with invaluable assistance from UNIFIL and the United Nations Mine Action Service and excellent cooperation from both sides, has been successful not only in clearing hazardous materials, declaring minefields as no threat and paving the way for the opening of crossing points, but also in building trust between the parties at an important moment. I thank the Government of Cambodia, within the framework of inter-mission cooperation, for agreeing to the temporary deployment, from May to November 2015, of its mine clearance team to UNFICYP, as well as the Security Council for its ongoing support. In the absence of a dedicated demining capacity within UNFICYP, such support and cooperation may need to continue during the next reporting period.

49. The visit to Cyprus of the United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards, and the mine explosion incident involving a Greek Cypriot farmer, highlighted the ongoing threat posed by mines in Cyprus, a threat that often goes unnoticed given the presence of the opposing forces along the ceasefire lines. While I welcome the commitment of the Turkish Cypriots to clear the Turkish forces minefield adjacent to the ceasefire line near Mammari, I am concerned by the delays and urge that the clearance be done as soon as possible to avoid the occurrence of another mine wash incident in the area. Given the acceleration of the talks, it is all the more important that the two sides engage and take concrete steps without further delay towards island-wide demining.

50. The efforts of the two mayors and municipalities of Nicosia, together with those of the representatives of the Nicosia Master Plan, are welcome and continue to

provide a model of successful cooperation by further developing and promoting a shared vision for the future of the city, with support from UNFICYP. Likewise, business leaders continued to make a valuable contribution to the peace process by creating incentives and opportunities for entrepreneurs from both sides to engage with one another and by highlighting the economic benefits to come from a reunification of the island. I commend them once again for their vision, and I encourage enhanced support by all concerned for their efforts to promote private sector initiatives that can foster interaction between the communities and that have a positive effect on levels of trade across the buffer zone, which remain low.

51. As I have done in previous reports, I continue to call upon the leaders of both communities to exert efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to widen and deepen economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts, including with a view to encouraging trade. Such contacts promote trust between the communities and help to address the Turkish Cypriots' concerns of isolation. I note that steps in that direction continue to be taken and urge both leaders to persist in addressing these issues. Likewise, I encourage the sides to fully engage civil society in the ongoing process, with a view to fostering grassroots support for a solution.

52. The ongoing dialogue among the leaders of the religious communities contributes positively to the climate surrounding the talks. By easing access to religious sites across the island, religious leaders have played an important role in fostering understanding and reducing mistrust between the communities which, in turn, has helped build grassroots support for reunification. In the critical months ahead, I strongly encourage both sides to continue to support this cooperation, including by enabling full access to the more than 500 churches and other places of worship in the north and to approximately 100 mosques in the south.

53. The closure of the UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust Programme at the end of December has brought an end to 10 years of concerted support to civil society action in the reconciliation process in Cyprus. As the peace process enters a critical phase, platforms that provide a space for citizens from all sectors of society to engage and have a voice in a future settlement are becoming all the more important. In that regard, I am pleased that the Cyprus dialogue forum will continue in 2016 and hope that its work will be further supported and its recommendations taken into serious consideration.

54. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the critical humanitarian work being done on behalf of the families of victims through the Committee on Missing Persons. I welcome the confirmation by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mustafa Akıncı, that the excavation teams of the Committee will have access to 30 suspected burial sites in military areas in the north of Cyprus. This represents important progress towards the objective of the Committee to locate, identify and return the remains of the many individuals who are still missing to their families. In the light of the advanced age of both relatives and witnesses, it is critical that the Committee be given the means and the information required to accelerate its work.

55. In the current positive climate, the role of UNFICYP in maintaining a conducive environment for negotiations remains of paramount importance to the overall success of the process. By pre-empting and responding in a timely and efficient manner to civilian, law and order and military issues that arise on a daily

basis in and around the buffer zone, UNFICYP helps to prevent political or military tension that could otherwise undermine the efforts of the two leaders. Despite minor incidents and challenges, which remained a regular occurrence, the situation along the ceasefire lines has remained calm and stable over the past six months.

56. Increased civilian use of the buffer zone continues to be a natural element of the normalization process, which UNFICYP promotes and facilitates, provided that it is undertaken in a safe and orderly manner, in accordance with established UNFICYP procedures. In this light, I once again call upon both sides to act decisively towards all who engage in activities not authorized by UNFICYP, thereby showing respect for UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone, supporting the Force in the implementation of its mandate and avoiding unnecessary tension. With the start of the hunting season, I am grateful for the good cooperation between UNFICYP and the Cyprus police in addressing instances of illegal hunting in the buffer zone.

57. It remains disappointing that the opportunity for direct communication between the commanders of the opposing forces has not yet been seized, despite the offer of facilitation and encouragement from UNFICYP. Opening such communication channels would undoubtedly assist in resolving or avoiding disputes and would also build critical trust, which would be key to a successful drawdown to agreed levels of foreign forces in a united Cyprus. I repeat my call for both sides to respond positively to the efforts of the Force Commander to strengthen relations and to explore the possibility of an early implementation of military confidence-building measures that could help improve the climate and build support for a settlement. I also once again call upon both sides to formally accept the aide-memoire of 1989, thereby bringing an end to the contestation of the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines. I reiterate that the ability of UNFICYP to play this role depends by and large on the commitment of the two sides to refrain from challenging the authority and legitimacy of UNFICYP in the buffer zone.

58. While acknowledging that closed-circuit television cameras can help monitor illegal activity in the buffer zone, and thus contribute to improved security in the area, such installations confer a military advantage and constitute a violation of the status quo if unaccompanied by a reduction in military personnel. I therefore strongly encourage a reduction in the military presence and posture along the ceasefire line, particularly in those positions that have been enhanced with closed-circuit television cameras, and particularly in the militarized area within the Venetian walls in old town Nicosia.

59. I note that the continued expansion of criminal networks and activities in the sensitive mixed village of Pyla, inside the buffer zone, continues to be a major source of concern and tension for the two communities in the village, the political leadership on both sides and the respective police services, creating a level of risk to the communities of Pyla that is avoidable. It is regrettable that, despite a shared acknowledgement of the problem and repeated facilitation attempts by UNFICYP, the sides have yet to agree on how to tackle the criminality and thereby reduce the risk to the communities of Pyla. Such coordination and cooperation between the respective police services would instil a broader confidence in the ability of the communities to live side by side in security, both at present and in a united Cyprus.

60. To respond to the new intercommunal dynamic outlined in the present report, UNFICYP significantly increased its support to the settlement talks during the reporting period, particularly in facilitating the work of the eight technical

committees, assisting with confidence-building measures and by providing security and logistical support to the (at times) daily meetings of the sides. Coupled with pressures on resources caused by increasing civilian access to the buffer zone, this new operational context has placed limitations on the ability of the mission to support new requirements, including the opening of two new crossing points. A capability gap has therefore emerged in the areas of UNFICYP military police, headquarters analytical and planning functions and patrols across the sectors to sustain current operations. To enable UNFICYP to be ready at this critical juncture, I request the Security Council to authorize a modest increase in force level, from 860 troops to 888.

61. In the light of positive developments on the ground and the support from the leaders during the visit in October of my Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, UNFICYP has, in coordination with my mission of good offices, intensified its planning in relation to a settlement, as requested by the Security Council most recently in its resolution 2234 (2015). This planning will continue to be guided by developments in the negotiations and the views of the sides on the possible role of the United Nations in that regard.

62. At the same time, I will continue to keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and report to the Security Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as is warranted.

63. I recommend that the mandate of the mission be extended for a period of six months, until 31 July 2016, together with a slight increase in the force level, from 860 to 888. I once again express my gratitude to the 34 countries that, since 1964, have contributed either troops or police or both to the mission, and I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers that lost their lives during that period in support of peace in Cyprus. It is incumbent upon all parties to work in a determined manner towards a comprehensive settlement, to which all Cypriots aspire and which would obviate the continuing need for a peacekeeping presence.

64. At this critical juncture in the peace process, and with encouraging prospects for an early solution, I count on the international partners of Cyprus to show commitment and resolve in supporting, in any way possible, initiatives and projects that build trust between the communities and foster support for a solution from the ground up. In that regard, I am particularly grateful for the sustained partnership between the United Nations and the European Union in support of confidence-building measures and other projects and initiatives, in particular crossing points, to the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and the Committee on Missing Persons.

65. I would like to express my appreciation to my Special Representative and Head of UNFICYP, Lisa Buttenheim, including for her commitment and dedication in serving as my Deputy Special Adviser. I would like to thank also the UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Kristin Lund, for her service. UNFICYP continues to lead the way in increasing the number of female personnel across the military, police and civilian components. Finally, I extend my thanks to all of the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council. I also express my appreciation to my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide.

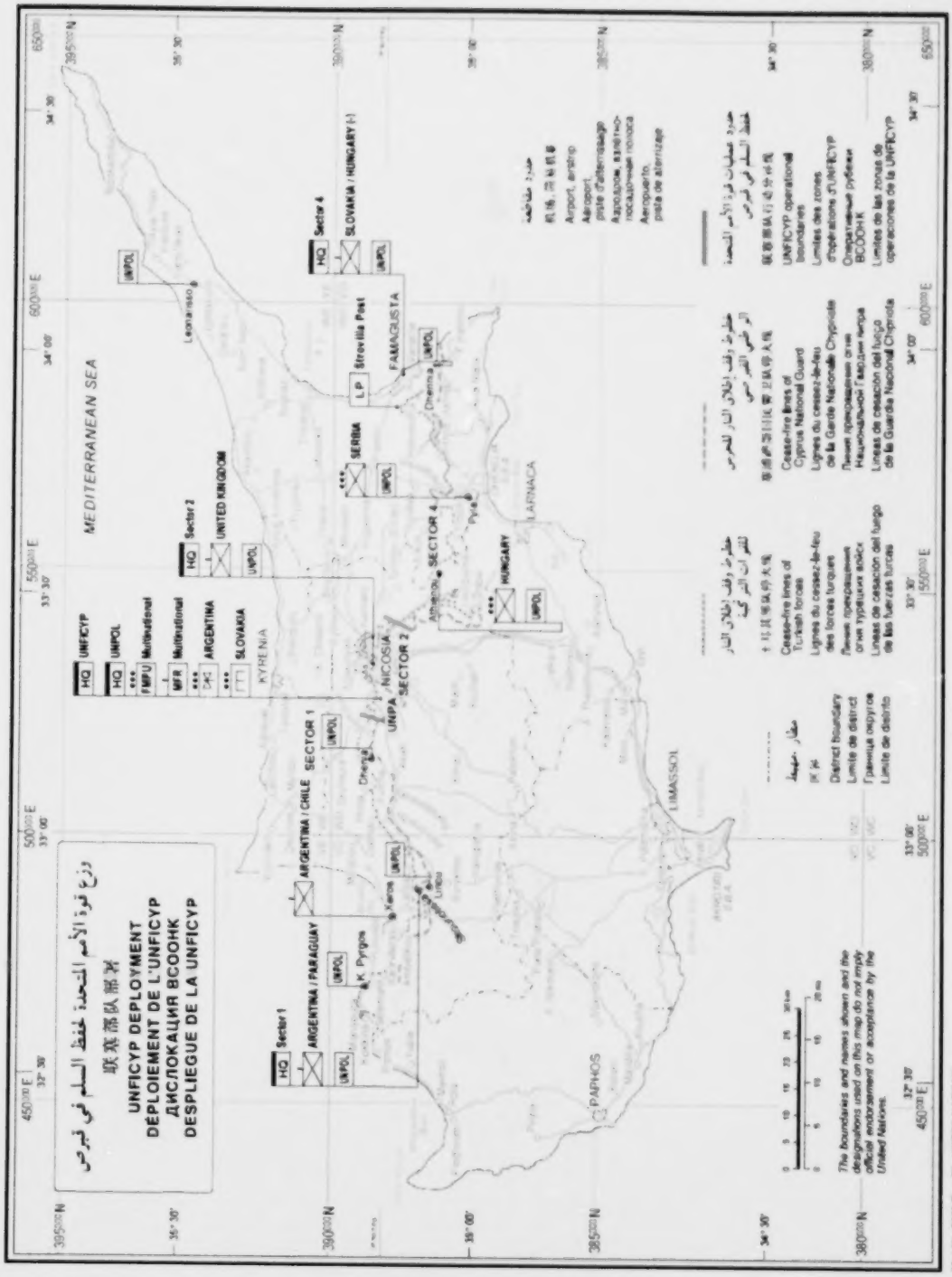
# Annex

## Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 15 December 2015)

| *Country* | *Military personnel* |
|---|---|
| Argentina[a] | 295 |
| Austria | 4 |
| Canada | 1 |
| Norway | 2 |
| Hungary[b] | 84 |
| Slovakia[c] | 200 |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 274 |
| **Total** | **860** |

| *Country* | *Police personnel* |
|---|---|
| Australia | 12 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 9 |
| China | 3 |
| Ireland | 12 |
| Lithuania | 1 |
| Montenegro | 4 |
| Romania | 3 |
| Serbia | 2 |
| Slovakia | 4 |
| Ukraine | 7 |
| **Total** | **57** |

[a] The Argentine contingent includes soldiers from Brazil (1), Chile (14) and Paraguay (14).
[b] The Hungarian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (7).
[c] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (39) and Ukraine (2).


UNFICYP DEPLOYMENT
DÉPLOIEMENT DE L'UNFICYP
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ ВСООНК
DESPLIEGUE DE LA UNFICYP
联塞部队部署
وزع قوة الأمم المتحدة لحفظ السلم في قبرص
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
NICOSIA
LIMASSOL
PAPHOS
LARNACA
FAMAGUSTA
Leonarisso
Dhekelia
Xeros
K. Pyrgos
Pyla
Athienou
Dhorna
Strovilia Post
UNFICYP
UNPOL
Multinational
ARGENTINA
SLOVAKIA
UNITED KINGDOM
HUNGARY
SERBIA
SLOVAKIA / HUNGARY
ARGENTINA / CHILE
ARGENTINA / PARAGUAY
Sector 1
Sector 2
Sector 4
SECTOR 1
SECTOR 2
SECTOR 4
UNPA
Cease-fire lines of Turkish forces
Lignes du cessez-le-feu des forces turques
Линии прекращения огня турецких войск
Líneas de cesación del fuego de las fuerzas turcas
Cease-fire lines of Cyprus National Guard
Lignes du cessez-le-feu de la Garde Nationale Chypriote
Линии прекращения огня Национальной гвардии кипра
Líneas de cesación del fuego de la Guardia Nacional Chipriota
UNFICYP operational boundaries
Limites des zones d'opérations d'UNFICYP
Ограничение зоны BCOOHK
Límites de las zonas de operaciones de la UNFICYP
District boundary
Limite de district
Границы округов
Límite de distrito
Airport, airstrip
Aéroport, piste d'atterrissage
Аэропорт, взлетно-посадочная полоса
Aeropuerto, pista de aterrizaje
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Map No. 2936 Rev. 85 UNITED NATIONS
December 2014
Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section